

PROCEEDINGS OF THE HISTORIC CONSERVATION BOARD

MONDAY, MARCH 22, 2004

3:00 P.M., J. MARTIN GRIESEL ROOM, CENTENNIAL PLAZA II

The Historic Conservation Board met at 3:00 P.M., in the J. Martin Griesel Room, Centennial Plaza II, with members Kirk, Kreider, Raser, Senhauser, Spraul-Schmidt, Sullebarger and Wallace present. Absent: Bloomfield

MINUTES

The minutes of the Monday, March 8, 2004 meeting were approved as submitted (motion by Sullebarger second by Spraul-Schmidt).

CERTIFICATE OF APPROPRIATENESS, 30 E. CENTRAL PARKWAY, OVER-THE-RHINE HISTORIC DISTRICT

Staff member Adrienne Cowden presented the staff report on this request for approval of exterior changes to the 17-story American Building. These included adding terrace railings, installing new storefronts and windows, and modifying the north elevation by converting windows to doors and adding balconies above the 6th floor. This exterior work is part of a total rehabilitation that will convert the historic resource into 37 residential and 2 retail units. She said she had received no comments from the neighborhood; only a representative of the Kroger Company had inquired about the project.

Ms. Cowden said all new work will be based on the original drawings. The existing modern storefronts will be replaced with a new metal storefront based on the original elevation drawings. The present metal windows will be replaced with new aluminum sash windows to match. In answer to Ms. Sullebarger, Ms. Cowden said that the existing windows are a mixture of painted metal sash and casement in poor condition. A new metal rail will be added to the fourteenth floor terraces to meet building code requirements.

On the north elevation, above the attached parking structure, a column of new balconies will be added on the easternmost and westernmost bays, from the 6th through the 12th floors. A third set will be added on the central bays of the 9th through 11th floors. The new balconies will be relatively transparent and detailed similarly to other metal elements on the building. In order to access the balconies, one window at each balcony will be converted into a doorway by removing the exterior wall below the sill. The new metal doorway will have a large glass area; a transom will fill to the original window head.

Ms. Cowden indicated that the work on the north elevation will not be visible from the primary façade on Central Parkway. Because of its height above grade and adjacent buildings, the new work will be only minimally visible and at a distance of several blocks. Staff recommended approval of the proposed work as consistent with the Over-the-Rhine historic guidelines and the Over-the-Rhine Comprehensive Plan, which encourages the creation of housing and neighborhood retail.

Mr. Mark Tilsley of Tilsley and Associates Architects was present to answer questions from the Board. The Board asked for clarification on the spa area atop the parking garage and whether spa gazebos, decks and railing were final designs. Mr. Tilsley responded that the area was still under review and may be revised. The spas will likely remain as shown, but the gazebos may be eliminated; some decking will be required. In answer to Mr. Kreider, Mr. Tilsley indicated that the spas had been elevated and placed on the northeast corner to take maximum advantage of the sunlight. He said a portion of the parapet may be extended in lieu of railings, but that any required railing would match those on the 14th floor terraces.

BOARD ACTION

The Board voted unanimously (motion by Sullebarger, second by Raser) to take the following actions:

1. Approve a Certificate of Appropriateness for the proposed work as shown in the drawings included in the staff report and presented at the March 22, 2004 Board meeting with the condition that final construction drawings be submitted to the Urban Conservator for review and approval prior to construction; and
2. Any additional work, including but not limited to the spa area, awnings and signage, shall be submitted to the Urban Conservator for review and approval prior to construction.

CINCINNATI HISTORIC INVENTORY

Staff member Adrienne Cowden presented an overview and sample sections of the recently completed second phase of an update of the City of Cincinnati Historic Inventory. This phase included a building-by-building survey of Over-the-Rhine and 15 west side neighborhoods. This phase completes 24 of the City's 52 neighborhoods, with an additional four currently under evaluation in a third phase. The project has been supported by a matching grant through the Ohio Historic Preservation Office.

Ms. Cowden emphasized that the survey was based primarily on the exterior characteristics of the structures, but also included properties with strong historical associations. These included several significant cemeteries and burial fields in West Price Hill. Ms. Cowden said the survey identified a total 155 eligible historic sites, but that approximately 100 previously identified properties had been lost, many with the widening of River Road.

Ms. Cowden indicated that copies of the report will be distributed to other City departments and interested parties such as the Cincinnati Preservation Association.

BY LEAVE

Mr. Kreider circulated a copy of a recent court decision upholding the City of Pepper Pike, Ohio's denial of a variance to allow a 6'-0" wrought iron security fence in a residential front yard. Mr. Kreider explained that the court found the City acted properly in denying a fence that was inappropriate to the neighborhood and would alter the character of the community. He likened this proposal to others put forth in downtown Cincinnati and of recent proposals for security measures within the historic districts.

ADJOURNMENT

As there were no other items for consideration by the Board, the meeting adjourned.

William L. Forwood
Urban Conservator

John C. Senhauser
Chairman

Date